

REASONS for passing a Bill in PARLIAMENT to
Erect three Courts of Conscience, in the three several Divisions hereafter Named, being within the Bills of Mortality, and without the City of London, and the Liberties thereof; for Relief of poor Debtors and Creditors, under the Value of Forty Shillings, to prevent vexations and chargeable Arrests and Suits at Law.

First, the Division of the Burrough of *Southwark*, with the Parishes in the County of *Surrey*, mentioned in the Bills of Mortality.

Secondly, The Division of the Hamlets of the *Tower* Liberty, with the Parishes in the Bills of Mortality, contained within the Hamlets of the *Tower* Liberty.

Thirdly, The Division called *Holborn* Division, consisting of the remaining Parishes, and part of Parishes in *Middlesex* (not comprehending *Westminster* nor the Liberties thereof) likewise mentioned in the Bills of Mortality.

THE Court of Conscience for the City of *London*, was first erected by an Act of Common Council of the said City, in the Nineteenth Year of King-*Henry* the Eighth.

The said Court being found to be good and Charitable, of great Ease and Benefit both to the poor Debtors and Creditors, as also much tending to the quiet and welfare of the City and Encouragement of Trade, was in the first and Third years of King *James* the first, established by Parliament, still limiting and confining the Jurisdiction of the said Court to the Citizens and Free-men of the City of *London*, and other persons that inhabit or shall inhabit within the said City or the Liberties thereof, being a Tradesman, Victualler, or Labourer. Nor did the Jurisdiction of the said Court of Conscience ever yet extend further than the City of *London* and the Liberties thereof.

That the Burrough of *Southwark*, and the Out-Parishes within the Bills of Mortality, are of late Years vastly increased in Buildings and Inhabitants, and abound in poor Tradesmen, Artificers, Laboures, Victuallers and others, far exceeding the City of *London* and the Liberties thereof: who for want of the like good Establishment of a Court or Courts of Conscience amongst them, are exposed to many and great Inconveniences tending to the impoverishment and ruine of themselves and Families. As,

Many vexatious Suits are daily commenced for inconsiderable Sums, and through extremity of Poverty, usual Exactions, the Implacability of Adversaries, frequent Imprisonments, and cost of Suit, &c. they are often put to six times more Charges than the Debt was; whereby many Families are left to the Parish, the Prisons filled with poor helpless Men and Women, Sickneses contracted, and Trade in a great measure hindred.

All which a Salutary Act for the Courts, of Conscience or Request, above mentioned, might in a good part prevent, as hath been experienced in the City of *London* and Liberties thereof, during the long time the like Court hath been there holden, Which is humbly submitted to the Prudence of this present Parliament.